



Le Chéile Update

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

JANUARY, 2008

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Dual company structure proposed for trust.**
- **Congregations pledge €10 million to trust fund**
- **Consultations on the charter of the trust to take place in February.**
- **Centenary celebrations for Dominicans and Patricians**

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From the Working Group

Athbhliain faoi shéan is faoi mhaise daoibh go léir. Seo an chéad imlitir ón iontaobhas Le Chéile. Is é ár n-aidhm eolas faoi dul chun chinn Le Chéile agus nuacht faoi na scoileanna a chur ar fáil daoibh.

Happy new year to all and welcome to the first newsletter of the Le Chéile Trust.

When the congregations set out to develop a collaborative Trust to ensure the future of their schools, they decided on a four-fold consultation process—Green Paper, White Paper, Bill and Act.. Le Chéile is now in the third phase of designing the new Trust—developing the “Bill”. The aim of the newsletter is to keep you informed of developments, and

also to share information from the different schools within the Trust, and we have reports of three sets of celebrations in this newsletter.

After considering the feedback from the Green and White Paper, the congregations have now embarked on the crucial design of the legal structure of the Trust. The law firm of Arthur O Hagan has been appointed as the legal advisors. They have considerable experience in dealing with legal issues in education. The working group is currently working with Mr. Des Rooney of that company to propose a definite structure for further consultation. It is hoped that this structure can be approved by the congregational leaders.

In order to develop the decision-making process related to this the development of the “Bill”, a “Shadow Council” consisting of two representatives from each congregation will meet three times this school year to give direction to the development of the Bill. The first meeting took place in November, and directions were giving on developing the Charter of the Trust, the legal issues and the finances of the Trust.

David Tuohy, who is working as an advisor for the new Trust, met with clusters of school principals to examine some of the practical implications of the new Trust for working with schools. Their perspectives are being considered in the legal framework of the Trust.

Developing the Charter

The key to the future of Le Chéile is to have a vibrant vision that inspires its work into the future. In developing the new Trust, considerable effort has gone into stating the values behind the Trust. The vision section on the White Paper was very well received. It now remains to develop a formal Charter that will have legal standing. A draft will be launched in February at a series of cluster meetings.

CLUSTER MEETINGS

- West: January 31st**
 - Dublin North: February 4th**
 - Dublin South: February 5th**
 - South: February 7th.**
- Details will be available in your school soon.**

After the cluster meetings, the Trust hopes to be able to offer schools support in the discussion of the charter document and generating feedback from Boards

of Management, Staff and Parents. It is hoped to have a plenary session where all schools will send two representatives (a Shadow Forum) on May 21st, where the Charter will be adopted.

Details of this will be announced later.

Legal Developments

The White Paper proposed a structure for the Trust that resembled the European Union, with a Council (Council of Ministers), a Forum (Parliament) and an Education Office (Commission). The aim of the structure was to give a strong democratic voice to the schools in determining key issues in the development of ethos.



Considering the feedback we got on the complexity of the decision-making structures, a new dual-company structure has been proposed that keeps these values and simplifies decision-making. The aim of this dual company structure is

to separate responsibility for land and finance into one company, and the other company will be responsible for the enterprise of the schools.

FUNDING COMPANY (SÍOL)

The Funding Company will be known as Síol, and will be responsible for decisions relating to Land and the Trust Fund. The members of this company will initially be appointed by the congregations, each congregation having equal voice. It is to this company that the congregations will license land. The company will also be responsible for the Trust Fund, and there will be a legal agreement to give a predetermined guaranteed level of funding for the operation of the Trust. This company takes on some of the responsibilities of the previous Council

ENTERPRISE COMPANY (LE CHÉILE)

The main work of the Trust with the schools will be carried out by Le Chéile. Each Board of Management will appoint two members, and the Funding Company will also appoint a fixed number of members. They will meet as one body, with each member having an equal vote. As one, they will make decisions on policy issues for the schools.

The advantage of this new structure is that it simplifies decision-making into a single body, and gives the schools full voice in the process. The legal structure also gives extra protection to the assets of the Trust.

Both companies will be served by the EDUCATION OFFICE. We are currently looking at the structure of the Education Office to ensure full support for the schools.

The advantage of the dual company structure is that it simplifies decision-making and gives the schools full voice in the process.

Congregations pledge €10 million to the future of Trusteeship

Financing the Trust

The congregations have agreed in principle to set up a Trust Fund of approximately €10 million. The aim of this fund will be to guarantee the work of the Trust for at least 20 years. The contribution of each congregation will be based on the number of schools they have in the Trust. The congregations have agreed to begin making contributions to the Fund in April, 2008, once we have secured charitable status for the Fund.

The Trust Fund will be used for the running costs of the

Trust. It will pay the salaries of those employed, replacing the different Education Officers in the congregations.



The fund will also be used for core projects to support and develop school ethos.

The Fund will be managed by the

Funding Company SÍOL, which will also be responsible for developing the capacity of the Trust Fund to support the schools beyond the initial twenty years.

This Fund marks a significant contribution by the congregations to the future role of Catholic Trusteeship in schools. It looks to developing the value dimension of Catholic education, rather than simply focusing on land and finances.

Shadow Council Meeting

The Shadow Council met in the Regency Hotel, Dublin on November 15th. The session was chaired by David Tuohy, and each congregation sent two delegates. On the vision for the future, the delegates affirmed the direction of the vision in the White Paper and asked the working group to develop a stand-alone Charter Document in consultation with Boards, staff and parents, based on the White Paper and feedback. In particular, they asked that the language be inclusive of the charters of Community Schools. The delegates accepted the legal advice on setting up a dual company structure, and asked the working



Shadow Council members at work

group to ensure that the democratic intent set out in the initial work be enshrined in the documents. They also asked that the group develop a proactive communication strategy with the schools. The third area discussed was finances. The delegates agreed to the €10million Trust Fund target, and agreed to contribute in four stages, beginning April 2008, as long as the fund had charitable status. They asked the working group to look at issues of how the Trust might support schools where there were existing funding arrangements between Trustees and schools for defined projects.

Dominican Sisters Celebrate 800 Years



Fr. Pat Lucey OP, Provincial, Sr. Helen Harmey OP, Congregation Prioress, with Minister Hanafin at NCH celebrations

The highlight of a year of celebrations North and South had to be the Concert Hall. In music, song, and drama, students from Dominican primary, secondary and third level schools and colleges portrayed the story which began in 1206 at Prouilhe, France, with the foundation of the first community of Dominican women. DVD's and dramatic vignettes traced the story of Dominican women, particularly Irish Dominican women from the 17th century onwards.

Skilful young actors and actresses brought to life the courage and spirit of these women, from the two elderly sisters who had returned to Galway in 1686 after more than thirty years exile in Spain, up to the present time and the challenges now facing us.



Over 350 students and teachers from various parts of Ireland were involved in the production under the guidance of Mrs Mary White, Principal in Wicklow, Ms Patricia Feighry, Cabra and Ms Bridie Gallagher, retired Deputy Principal from Cabra. The harmonious blending of 200 voices from a number of schools, as well as talented soloists and musicians, were the ingredients

of a vibrant performance, with each school interpreting their scene in their own unique way. A display of art from each school provided an additional expression of how students view their heritage.

The strong expressions of diversity forming such a great unity with such vibrancy, creativity and enthusiasm by all these Dominican schools was quite powerful to behold. With no doubt similar spirits alive and well in the many other schools preparing to become part of the Le Chéile Trust, we can surely look forward with great hope to the full formation of a Trust which is determined to reflect not just the unity we share but also the diversity of our heritages.



Pupils reenact history of Dominicans in NCH pageant



MASS OF FAITH

In honour of Margaret Aylward – Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Faith

A new Mass, *MASS OF FAITH* has been composed by Marie Dunne CHF, to celebrate 140 years of the life and mission of the Sisters of the Holy Faith. The Holy Faith Congregation was founded by Margaret Aylward in 1867.

The *MASS OF FAITH* was sung on RTE for the Sunday Mass in December 2007 by the choir from Saint Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School, Glasnevin. The CD and music score of the Mass will be available at the end of January.

Photograph shows choir with Sr. Marie at the RTE studio



Patrician Brothers Upcoming Celebration

The Patrician Brothers Congregation was founded in Tullow, Co Carlow in 1808 to provide education for local children who would otherwise receive no education. Since then the Brothers have been involved in teaching and leading schools in Ireland and in a number of overseas countries. To mark the Bicentenary of the foundation of the Congregation, the Patrician Brothers are organizing an education seminar where educators, and those with a special interest in school education, may come together for stimulating discussion and reflection on what matters most in schools in the contemporary context of Irish Society .

Queries, suggestions, expressions of interest or support may be addressed to Bro. Cormac Commins at:

cormaccommins@eircom.net

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

3rd & 4th July 2008

St. Patrick's College, Maynooth